

March 21, 2011

***Chris VanDeHoef testifying in opposition to House Bill 6600 An Act
Implementing the Recommendations of the Legislative Paperless Task Force and
the Task Force to Study the Reduction of State Agency Paper and Duplicative
Procedures***

Senator Slossberg, Representative Morin and distinguished Members of the Government, Administration and Elections Committee, my name is Chris VanDeHoef and I am testifying in opposition to HB 6600 An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Legislative Paperless Task Force and the Task Force to Study the Reduction of State Agency Paper and Duplicative Procedures.

I am a Principal with the TCORS Capitol Group, LLC, a lobbying firm in Hartford and I am a registered lobbyist – I also represent the CT Commission on Freedom of Information (CCFOI). However, I am not testifying in my role with CCFOI or on behalf of my company. I am testifying in opposition to this legislation as a private citizen.

For the record, I have filed an FOI complaint with the Freedom of Information Commission due to my inability to gain access to a list of bills a few weeks ago. The short of the complaint: I did not have access to the Internet and I needed to see the list of bills from that day for a phone conversation I was going to be having later in the day. One of the gentlemen in the bill room refused to provide me with the information, he informed me the information was available "online" and was disinterested in my lack of access to the Internet.

This does not mention the inability to print legislation that is over fifteen (15) pages, which would include this very bill I am testifying on, or the list of Committees that Members sit on, or anything else that was formally available. I am aware that I could "subscribe" to a bill box for \$300.00 per Session. However, we have decided that was not an investment we would make and that we would continue to use the Internet or request copies when necessary.

It needs to be noted that technology is not perfect and, in spite of the hard work and dedication from the very capable employees in the IT department, the wireless access in the LOB has crashed numerous times and so has the state legislative website. That makes the documents 100% unattainable and this is unquestionably unacceptable

In short, it seems relatively backwards from the public discussions the legislature and the Administration have put forward over the past years pursuing a more "open" government. However, while the idea to move to a more streamlined, technology savvy system is a laudable goal, it, unfortunately, I'm afraid, is a step backward in regards to government being as open and transparent as possible. It is unacceptable for the legislature to be acting on legislation that might have wide

sweeping and drastic affects when that very legislation isn't available in a paper form and to everyone who cares to read it, review or opine on it.

In this day and age of drastic budget shortfalls and declining revenue, it is understandable that anything and everything is on the chopping block. That said, I caution this Committee, the Legislature and the Governor, that the relatively small savings that cutting printing costs gains does not supersede the worth that maintaining access to these documents provides.